

Annual Report

Montana State Special Education Advisory Panel

July 1, 2007-June 30, 2008



**Prepared by the Montana Office of Public Instruction
Linda McCulloch, Superintendent
Division of Special Education
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Helena, Montana 59620-2501**

Chair's Report

The State Special Education Advisory Panel had a challenging and very productive year. In November, John Copenhaver, Director of Mountain Plains Regional Resource Center (MPRRC), met with the state special education advisory panel members to familiarize them with previous Panel activities, availability of resources and the Panel's By-laws and procedures. He also provided orientation on current issues and hot topics the panel is involved in. His orientation was instrumental in ensuring that all members on the Panel had the necessary background information to fully participate in the activities of the Panel from the very first meeting.

The Panel held its first meeting in November. In addition to the presentation provided by Mr. Copenhaver, Assistant Superintendent Bob Runkel gave a general overview of the factors the OPI uses in determining whether a district meets the requirements and the purposes of IDEA consistent with Section 616(a)(1)(C)(i) and 34 CFR 300.600 of IDEA and its implementing regulations.

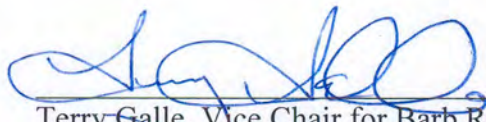
The professional development unit of the division reported on the extensive work they are doing in professional development, the Montana Behavioral Initiative and other grant-funded activities.

Throughout the year each component of the state's responsibilities under the IDEA were brought before the panel for up-date information and continuing support and guidance from the panel.

The Panel reviewed statewide data on performance indicators for students with disabilities and following discussion of proposed targets and improvement strategies for inclusion in the State Performance Plan, unanimously approved the targets established for each of the 20 performance indicators and endorsed submission of the plan to the U.S. Department of Education. As a part of our Panel activities, we invited personnel from other divisions within the Office of Public Instruction, as well as personnel from other agencies and programs, to share their knowledge. Such discussions provided a rich foundation for the coordination of improvement strategies.

The panel continues to be a strong resource to the division and is fully vested with committed stakeholders who all share the common cause of improving results for students with disabilities.

Submitted by:



Terry Galle, Vice Chair for Barb Rolf, Chair
Montana Special Education Advisory Panel

1-16-09

Date

Overview

In accord with Section 612(21), of the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA), Montana has established the Special Education Advisory Panel. The responsibilities of this state advisory panel are to:

- Advise the Office of Public Instruction of unmet needs within the state in the education of children with disabilities;
- Comment publicly on any rules or regulations proposed by the state regarding the education of children with disabilities;
- Advise the Office of Public Instruction in developing evaluations and reporting on data to the Secretary under Section 618 of the Act;
- Advise the Office of Public Instruction in developing corrective action plans to address findings identified in federal monitoring reports under Part B of the Act;
- Advise the Office of Public Instruction in developing and implementing policies relating to the coordination of services for children with disabilities; and
- Advise on the education of eligible students with disabilities who have been convicted as adults and incarcerated in adult prisons.

Montana's Special Education Advisory Panel serves as the steering/advisory committee for the State Performance Plan (SPP) under Part B of IDEA, annual self-assessment activities and development of improvement strategies for improving outcomes of students with disabilities. In this capacity, the advisory panel, on a continuing basis, reviews statewide outcome data on key indicators for students with disabilities, advises the Office of Public Instruction on improvement strategies for improved outcomes and reviews progress on the key indicators on no less than an annual basis.

Following is the annual report of the panel for the 2007-2008 school year. During this reporting period, there were four scheduled meetings. A list of meeting dates, panel membership and a summary of panel activities are given below.

MEMBERSHIP

The Montana Special Education Advisory Panel is formed of a broad representation of individuals with knowledge and expertise on needs of children with disabilities. Appointments to the panel are made by Superintendent of Public Instruction Linda McCulloch on an annual basis for up to a maximum of a three-year term limit. Following is the 2007-2008 membership list of the panel and the areas they represented:

Dave Mahon**
Terry Galle*
Denise Herman

State/Local Administrator
Business Concerned with Transitions
Part C/IDEA Representative

Kenneth Miller
Susan Gunn
Jackie Emerson
Carroll Jim DeCoteau
Barb Rolf, Amy McCord
Susan Gunn, Coral Beck,
Dave Mahon
Ron Fuller
Wanda Grinde
Amy McCord
Samantha Hendricks
Sharon Lindstrom
Barb Rolf***

Terry Teichrow

Coral Beck

Higher Education
Regular Classroom Teacher
State Agency
Teacher of Children with Disabilities
Parent of a Child with Disabilities

Juvenile and Adult Corrections
Legislator
Private School Representative
Student Representative
Special Education, Program Administrator
Representative of Other State Agencies
Involved in the Financing or Delivery
of Related Services to Children with
Disabilities
Subtitle B of Title VII of the McKinney-
Vento Homeless Assistance Act
State Child Welfare Agency Responsible for
Foster Care

* Incoming Chair
** Secretary
*** Panel Chair

MEETINGS

The Special Education Advisory Panel met four times during state fiscal year FY '08 on the following dates.

November 1-2, 2007
April 24-25, 2008

January 17-18, 2008
June 12-13, 2008

All four meetings were held in Helena.

Notices of panel meetings were sent to local newspapers and placed on the Office of Public Instruction's Web site. A public comment period was made available at each meeting and accommodations provided, when requested.

PANEL FOCUS

The panel focused its activities this year on the following areas:

Montana's State Performance Plan (SPP) and the Annual Performance Report (APR)

Student Information System, Data Warehouse and the Special Education Records
Division Responsibilities and Activities
District and State Level of Determinations
Legislative Actions
Collaborations with CSPD
Achievement in Montana (AIM)
E-Grants
Response to Intervention (RTI)
Highly Qualified Teachers (HQT)

In addition, the panel had presentations on topics that were of immediate relevance to improving outcomes for students with disabilities.

To assist the panel in its work, guest speakers were invited to provide presentations on relevant topics and to participate in discussion of the issues. Presentations were made on the following:

- Early Assistance Program—Tim Harris introduced Kathleen Magone, Chief Legal Counsel and Compliance Officer. She presented a written report required annually for Special Education complaints and due process hearing requests.
- AIM and E-Grants—Dave Nagel gave an update on the AIM and E-Grant programs.
- School Improvement/Monitoring Overview—The Division of Special Education monitors described the Compliance Monitoring process as outlined in the *Montana Special Education Compliance Monitoring Process* guide that was distributed to the Panel members.
- State Performance Plan and Annual Performance Report for 2006-2007—Data for each of the performance indicators, current and proposed improvement strategies, proposed new targets and proposed revisions to the State Performance Plan were discussed with the Advisory Panel.
- Higher Education Consortium—Ken Miller gave the panel an overview of the history of the Higher Education Consortium in Montana and the work that is being done now.
- RTI—Tara Ferriter-Smith reviewed the RTI project with the Panel.
- Grant Research Partnerships—Judy Snow, the OPI State Assessment Director, told the panel that two research-based grants had been received in the amount of \$3 million to develop modified achievement standards.
- Disproportionality—Bob Runkel reported on the standards for significant disproportionality and the impact on one Montana District.
- Joint meeting of the State Special Education Advisory Panel and the State Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD) Council—The Panel met with the CSPD Council at the Park Plaza Hotel for the afternoon session.
- The OPI Federal Liaison and State and National Relations Update—Rusty Harper updated the Panel on Federal and State-level issues.

- Highly Qualified Teachers—Bob Runkel informed the Panel that Montana has recently received the results of the NCLB Title II monitoring. The report cites a concern with Montana's compliance with the Highly Qualified Teacher (HQT) provisions of the NCLB, including the method that we use to collect data on the number of classes taught by teachers that meet the federal HQT definition.
- Demonstration of IRIS—Dick Trerise gave a PowerPoint presentation of IRIS, which is Idea '04 and Research for Inclusive Settings

RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE 2007-2008 SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY PANEL

In its role as the advisory/steering committee for the self-assessment process and the Annual Performance Report under Part B of IDEA, the Panel:

- Reviewed statewide data on performance indicators for students with disabilities;
- Held a joint meeting with the State Council for Comprehensive System of Personnel Development for the purpose of reviewing and making joint recommendations for professional development activities designed to improve instruction and student outcomes;
- Heard presentations and participated in discussions on issues affecting the outcomes for students with disabilities; and
- Reviewed the Indicators Focusing on FAPE in the LRE and accepted targets for the Indicators.

Recognition

The panel wishes to recognize the following individuals for their presentations and provision of resource materials to assist the Panel in its work:

John Copenhaver, Director, MPRRC

Office of Public Instruction Staff

Robert Runkel	Marilyn Pearson	Nikki Sandve
Marlene Wallis	Susan Bailey-Anderson	Dan McCarthy
Frank Podobnik	Dick Trerise	Tim Harris
Francisco Roman	Pete Carparelli	Linda McCulloch
Doug Doty	Tara Ferriter-Smith	Anne Rainey
Karen Jeschke	Mary Gallagher	Floy Scott
Dan McCarthy	Bud Williams	Jenine Synness

And especially Marlene Wallis, Office of Public Instruction, for the support she provided to the panel by taking excellent minutes, providing materials and making meeting arrangements.